(c) No, Sir.

Procurement of multi-role combat aircraft

4373. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:.Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent decision of the US permitting US companies to bid for 126 multi-role combat aircraft to India, will facilitate licensed production of F-16 and F-18 aircrafts in India; and

(b) whether India is still keeping its options open for acquiring Israeli, French and South African made fighters for gradual replacement of the ageing MIG squadron with IAF?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Issue of licensed production is not connected with any specific aircraft. Request For Proposal (RFP) for procurement of aircraft including Transfer Of Technology (TOT) for manufacture under license as per need, is issued to the known vendors who are likely to meet the requirement of the Air Force.

Procurement of F-16 fighter planes

4374. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF is not in favour of acquiring F-16 fighter planes from USA A-l;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government is considering purchase of F-16 planes from the point of view of political and diplomatic angle; and

(c)what are the considerations before the Government to acquire F-16 which did not find favour with IAF?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness. It would not be in the interest of national security to give details.